



TRAGALLES MEXICANUS: Vig. & Horsf.

GRAUCALUS MENTALIS, *Vig. and Horsf.*

Varied Graucalus.

Graucalus mentalis, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 217.

Lanius robustus, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. xviii. ?—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 311 ?

Robust Shrike, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 74 ?—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 67 ?

NEW SOUTH WALES, or the south-eastern division of Australia, is the native habitat of the present species ; it is by no means a rare bird in the Upper Hunter and all similar districts, yet I did not succeed in finding its nest and eggs ; they are therefore desiderata with me.

There is no one member of the family to which it belongs which undergoes so many changes of plumage as the present species, and it is consequently very puzzling to the ornithologist. In extreme youth, or during the first few months after it has left the nest, the throat, chest and back of the neck is jet-black, while the breast and abdomen are rayed with obscure arrow-shaped markings of the same colour on a greyish white ground ; from this state individuals in every variety of change, to the uniform grey throat and head, with black lores and mark under the eye, are to be met with. Independently of a difference in its markings, its much smaller size will at all times serve to distinguish it from *Graucalus melanops*, which inhabits the same districts. Insects of various orders and caterpillars, which are either captured on the wing or taken from the branches, form its diet.

In the adult the upper surface and wings are dark slate-grey, passing into paler grey on the forehead and on the rump and upper tail-coverts ; primaries and secondaries slaty black, narrowly edged with greyish white ; outer webs of the three secondaries nearest the body grey ; tail black, the lateral feathers largely tipped with white ; lores deep velvety black, which colour is continued above and below the eye ; throat and breast grey ; insertion of the wing, under surface of the wing, abdomen and under tail-coverts white ; bill black ; irides and feet dark brown.

In the accompanying Plate I have figured the extremes of colouring assumed by the bird ; the darkest-coloured being the young of the year.